

The Preciousness of Faith in JESUS CHRIST,

A
S E R M O N

DELIVERED TO THE
CHURCH, MEETING IN GLASS-HOUSE-YARD,
ALDERSGATE-STREET,

ON THE
LORD'S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 28, 1788.

BY THE
REV. RICHARD ELLIOT, A. B.
PASTOR OF THE SAID CHURCH,

(Formerly of Bennet-College, Cambridge)

Who was suddenly taken ill in the Pulpit, whilst
preaching the same, when he ceased from his Labours,
and a few Hours after entered into Rest.

*Well done, good and faithful Servant—enter thou into the Joy of
thy Lord. Matt. xxv. 23.*

*Be ye also ready, for the Son of Man cometh at an Hour when ye
think not. Luke xii. 40.*

L O N D O N:

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

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FOR THE YEAR 1911-1912

CHICAGO, ILL., 1912

BY THE PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

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THE following Sermon was taken down in *Short-hand* by a Member of the Church to which it was preached, and transcribed at their Request, in order for Publication: And as very few, if any, Discourses delivered *extempore* (which was Mr. Elliot's constant Practice) are spoken so correctly, as not to need the revising Hand of the Preacher; it is therefore hoped, the candid Reader will make every reasonable Allowance for such Inaccuracies as he may find in the following Pages.

N. B. The Profit arising from the Sale of this Publication will be given to the Poor of the said Church.

The Preciousness of Faith in JESUS CHRIST.

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S E R M O N.

2 PET. I. 1—4.

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ; to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

IN our former discourses upon these words, we proceeded so far as to speak of that precious faith, by which the apostle, in this epistle, characterizes or distinguishes those to whom he writes, from the rest of the world; from those that dwell in the same place, the same city,

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the same town, or in the same house or family with them; for all that hear the word, all to whom the gospel comes in the report of it, have not faith. Oh, how little is that *like precious faith*, that kind of faith which the apostles had, found even among professors!

I OBSERVED to you several reasons why it might be called *precious* faith. That which is precious is of high esteem among men; and did they but know what this faith is, they would reckon it *precious* indeed! *most precious*! Cast it into the fire, try it ever so much with burning and torturing, it loses nothing; it comes out again only refined from the dross that might adhere to it. It lives; and they that have it live by it, and shall live for ever. What Solomon says of wisdom, Prov. iii. 15. may be here fitly applied: "It is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to it." This precious faith is *the gift of God*. All the riches that a man hath, thousands and tens of thousands of gold and silver, nay, had he even more wealth than is contained in the whole nation, or the Indies, at his disposal, it would not purchase this faith: were it offered it would be utterly contemned, despised and rejected,

rejected, as Peter despised and rejected the offer of Simon Magus ; counting it an unspeakable, if not an unpardonable evil, to think, that the *gift of God* might be *purchased* with money.

THIS faith may well be called *precious* faith, for it will make a man rich; rich indeed! rich towards God : and not only rich, but also happy. Oh, how happy is that soul who is a partaker of this precious faith ! he can part with every thing for it. There is nothing upon earth that he possesses, or can possess, that he will hold dear unto him, compared with this precious faith : rather than lose it, rather than give it up, he will part with riches, honors, pleasures, houses, lands, yea, and his own life also. If he must die for confessing it, he will not love his life unto the death. “ The Holy Spirit witnesseth (saith Paul) in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide (or wait for) me ; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself ; so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received, to testify the gospel of the grace of God, Acts xx. 23, 24. This is *precious* faith indeed !

THIS faith, with regard to the blessings contained in it, or that it draws along with it, comprehends every thing that relates to justification, every thing that relates to sanctification; and what shall I say more? every thing that the scripture represents as making us to appear in the likeness and image of God. To be justified is a great thing indeed! It is to be cleared in the sight of God, from all the charges which the righteous law hath brought against us; to be acquitted from every sentence of condemnation contained in the law, because of our transgressions, because of our iniquities inward and outward: precious faith justifies us from all; and for this reason, because it lays hold on Christ, puts him on, and teaches and causes, through grace, the happy believer to cleave to him with purpose of heart, come what will. “What things were gain to me, (says Paul) these I counted loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which
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is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith," Phil. iii. 7—9. Give up faith, or let faith be taken away, there is no hold that any man hath or can have of Jesus Christ.

God saves us by *grace*; but this is discovered and granted to us by faith, Eph. ii. 8. The grace whence our salvation originates, hath its being in God, and was given to us of God in Christ Jesus, before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9. Faith therefore leads us to God, and cements our hearts to him through Christ. That man who thinks meanly, or speaks contemptibly of *the faith of God's elect*, is an enemy to the gospel, a stranger to it, so far as it relates to the doctrine of faith. He may do it ignorantly; but he shall not be suffered to continue in that state of ignorance and error, if he be one of God's elect, chosen through faith unto sanctification. "We are bound to give thanks always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, (says Paul to the Thessalonians) because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel," 2 Theff. ii. 13. Ye must be called unto it;
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and all the elect of God are or shall; and they will hear, and understand in due time, more or less, that "whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. viii. 30. The apostle does not mention *sanctification* there, because it is inseparably connected with justification. No man ever was, or can be justified, that is not also sanctified. It is as necessary to be sanctified, as it is to be justified. There is no entering into the kingdom of heaven, for any one that is not *made meet* to be a partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light, Col. i. 12. "Blessed are the pure in heart: (Why?) for they shall see God," Matt. v. 8. But no unclean thing shall ever enter heaven: therefore says Paul, writing to the Corinthians, "Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall enter into the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Have we not here fair warning given us? and must not a man be wilfully blind, or read the word without any attention or thought, if he does not well consider what it is to be one of these characters? Many people will take up the meaning of the words quickly, readily; nor will they be at a
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loss even to talk about them; but more is required than barely to think or talk of them; we must enter into the very spirit of the passage, and receive the truth which these words convey and import. If I am not delivered from the power and dominion of all these sins, and others that might be mentioned, I am not yet made free with that freedom with which the Son of God makes his people free, John viii. 36. I may be assaulted with thoughts, suggestions, or temptations, with regard to these or any other sins; but do I abhor them?—Do I repel them?—Do I pray for strength against them?—If I do from the heart, I shall never leave off, I shall never cease until I obtain such a victory over those lusts and corruptions as will make my mind easy and at rest in Christ.

WE have a warfare, my brethren, and an awful warfare it is too. We fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. The scriptures assure us they are all against us: And how shall we overcome them? They are stronger than we. The flesh is full of corrupt desires. The lust of the flesh, Oh, how does it deceive, and how does it prevail against the generality of mankind!

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Old and young, rich and poor, are all become a prey to it, till grace delivers them.

THEN there is the world, that is full of snares and temptations. The men of the world encourage one another to maintain a kind of worldly dignity and honor that avails them nothing; because they, receiving honor one of another, seek not the honor that cometh from God only, John v. 44.

THE devil is the great invisible enemy of God and of his saints. He works by the world: he works by the lusts of the flesh, as much as he possibly can, to draw us off from God: to make us forget Christ, and to make us place our hopes and expectations of honor and happiness upon what we possess and enjoy in this world. Oh we must in heart—and the christian does—give up all for Christ, *precious* Christ; he is dearer to the believer than thousands of gold and silver. Death, with all its terrors, cannot possibly deter a christian from confessing Christ at any rate, and in any way, at least not for a continuance: he may for a while be affected with fear, and may be ready to deny him, even as Peter did; but he will, like him, repent afterwards; he will

will weep bitterly; Matt. xxvii. 75. Oh! the folly, the wickedness, the madness of thinking so slightly of the Son of God! of treating the Lord Jesus with so much derision, and so much contempt, as to be afraid of confessing him! to turn their backs upon him! to love the world more than Christ. This is the case with many; they fall away; nor is there room to hope they can be renewed again unto repentance, seeing they thereby crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame, Heb. vi. 6. they doing it deliberately, confirming what they have said, and publishing it, as *Francis Spira* did, who thereby, as far as could be judged by appearances, sealed up his own awful condemnation.

FAITH will save us through Jesus Christ, who is the object of true faith; but it never can save us if we let go Christ, if we give him up, if we think the world more desirable than he. "Who-soever he be of you (says Christ) that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple," Luke xiv. 33. therefore strive, my brethren, to get this matter settled in your minds, that God hath given you precious faith in his Son, that he hath opened to you a door of hope and mercy

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that can never be shut against you, or any that come to God through Christ.

WE all have sinned ; every man, and every woman upon earth hath broken the law of God. We all have transgressed, and who can say how often ? The sight, the knowledge of our being sinners against God, if it takes proper hold of our minds and hearts, will cause us to become little, low, vile in our own eyes ; will work humility. There are many who see their error, in judgment :—There are many who are ready to acknowledge they have offended in certain instances ; but for persons to confess their pride, their self-will, self-conceit, covetousness, vanity, are instances very rarely to be met with.

It is the hardest thing in the world (as is commonly said) for a man to acknowledge, or be ready to say, I have been mistaken ; I was in an error. Few people do this when it affects their reputation, or their character, or will make them appear to be, as it were, unsteady, fickle, inconstant men ; but nothing of this kind affects the upright in heart ; he has nothing in view but truth ; and so far as he apprehends truth, he will embrace it, and speak of it : But no such
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man will hastily receive any new opinion, unless he is convinced by the word of God, that he has hitherto been mistaken, or in error; for if he does, he is a weak man. But let a man be obstinate in defence of the truth, and confess it at any rate.

To them that have obtained like precious faith with us. The apostles had this faith: All common believers have it. It is not a faith that involves in it the assurance of their own salvation; but, in consequence of their believing—in consequence of their abiding in the faith, they shall certainly be saved. But it must be tried, and will be tried and examined; and it is called forth by the Spirit of God in such a way as he pleases. Some people may be too rash, and force, as it were, a kind of confidence upon themselves, with regard to their future state, through faith in Christ, when their faith is not manifested to be the faith of God's elect, and will admit of many doubts. If they are wise men, they will be concerned to have these doubts resolved and cleared up, not by their own reasoning, but by the word of God.

THIS precious faith, as I have in effect told you already, and now expresses it again in one

word, *worketh by love*; and then it is that it overcometh the world. No selfishness can prevail there; no covetousness, no pride can prevail there; for love is against all these dispositions, and all these corruptions of our depraved nature. Happy is the man, therefore, whom the Son of God makes free, and sets at liberty to rejoice in him, and to walk (according to the measure of grace given to him) as Christ himself also walked.

To *them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. This faith has for its object, the *righteousness of God*. It is plain from what I have cited out of the Philippians, that was what Paul fixed upon, to *be found in his righteousness*; so I think it must be understood here; unless we put a forced sense upon the words, as if this righteousness was the cause of, or produced this faith in us; it is rather *grace* that does that. The object is righteousness, *that is* what we want; and it is *a righteousness of God*.—It is a righteousness that God himself hath provided and given [unto men in Christ. “They which receive abundance of grace (says Paul, Rom. v. 17.) and of the gift of righteousness, shall

shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Abundance of grace we needed. Oh what grace is wanted by us, to combat with, and overcome our own corruptions! Our tempers are very different in certain respects, we say; but the *principle* of tempers is alike in all; there is no difference, for all have sinned. Corruption may work differently in various people; but as to the grand principle of it, it is the same. The degrees are various. There is pride in all men, self-seeking, vain glory, and a thousand evils; but all men have not the same degree and measure of it; and therefore we see a great difference in the natural dispositions and tempers of men. But all must be brought low, must humble themselves before God: We must give God our hearts, acknowledge he has a right to us, to ours, to all that we have; and that we have no right to any thing we have; but to use it to his glory, and for the good of our fellow-creatures, including our own, which is inseparable from it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," Matt. xix. 19.

THIS righteousness is of God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ; for God is the giver of it; but Christ was the worker of that righteousness
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out. It is the obedience of Christ to the law of God, fully and completely, without the least flaw or defect, as the sent Redeemer and Saviour of the world. It was the righteousness we owed to God, as breakers of his law. We had not kept it, which we ought to have done; but Christ kept it fully, and that for us too. We had incurred the penalty of it, which was death, but Christ has performed that too; and therefore you have them connected together, Gal. iii. 13, 14. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,—that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," which Spirit always accompanies true faith in Jesus Christ.

WELL, then he prays for them: and what does he pray for? That *grace and peace might be multiplied unto them, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord*, ver. 2. You are in Christ; you believe on him: Do you cleave to him with purpose of heart. Let it be your study and your aim to glorify him.—Well, brethren, you are yet in the world, you are yet exposed to temptation, and you do not know how
long

long you may be in the world. There may be much affliction and temptation that may accompany you in the world: well then, you need grace daily, you need peace daily, you need daily to receive out of his fulness, grace for grace.—It is impossible to describe the riches of the glory of the faith you have in Christ—and faith shall remain——*[Here the preacher's countenance changed, and his words, for a sentence or two, were inarticulate; after which he distinctly uttered the following, which appears rather unintelligible]*—Well now, I cannot, you may perceive, exercise faith for your benefit through the Lord Jesus Christ—*[he paused, then added]*—and faith—*[here he paused again for some time, and then said]*—Time is short.—*[It wanted then just five minutes of twelve o'clock by the dial.]* He uttered a few words more in a very low tone of voice, but quite inarticulate. The church being greatly alarmed, two of the congregation went up into the pulpit, one of whom requested he might assist him to sit down; upon which he turned about his face to him, and with a pleasing countenance said, in a broken manner, “Do let me speak a little more to the people.” He then turned his face to the congregation, leaning upon the cushion, and looking on them, with an endearing and affectionate

tionate smile, moved his lips, as if speaking very earnestly; but could not be understood. When he was taken from the front of the pulpit, his arms, losing their support, dropped; and he was incapable of moving his legs. He was immediately carried, in the arms of assisting friends, from the pulpit to the vestry; where a small quantity of warm wine and water in a table spoon was put into his mouth, which almost overpowered him, and brought on a retching. Speechless, though not insensible, he was carried from the vestry, and put into a coach which had been sent for, and conveyed (attended and supported by his friends) to his own house. He was put to bed directly, and let blood. His physician was immediately sent for, who prescribed for him, but gave no hope of his recovery. He lay very composed, till about a quarter of an hour past four o'clock, in the afternoon of the same day, and in that easy manner, without a struggle or a groan, was his spirit conveyed from the church below, to the church triumphant above; there to unite with that redeemed countless throng, in ascribing salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB!

F I N I S.

The Rev. Mr. Elliot's late Publications on the
TRINITY, &c. (exclusive of his former Works)
are :

1. **D**IVINE REVELATION the only test
of sound Doctrine; or, a further Reformation wanted in the reformed Churches. Being an attempt to prove that the doctrine of the TRINITY, as commonly held and taught, is not revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and consequently is no article of the christian faith.

2. SCRIPTURE SUFFICIENCY; or the Bible-Christian's Plea. Wherein the principal objections of Mr. J. WEIR to the scripture testimony of JEHOVAH and his CHRIST, as set forth in a book, intituled, "Divine Revelation the only Test of sound Doctrine," are duly considered and refuted.

3. SACRED CONTROVERSY; or a Defence of the Christian Faith, as it was once delivered to the faints. In which the objections of Mr. SHRUBSOLE to the apostles' doctrine of CHRIST, and the sufficiency of his redemption, are fully answered.

4. THE SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY of JESUS CHRIST; or a demonstration from the sacred
Books,

Books, that JESUS CHRIST, in his *complete* Person, is *truly* and properly the *begotten* SON of the *only* LIVING and TRUE GOD. Being an Answer to the Rev. Mr. Romaine's celebrated Sermon, intituled, "The Self-existence of JESUS CHRIST."

5. THE **CONSISTENT* PROTESTANT; or the Harmony of divine Truth asserted. Being an answer to a pamphlet intituled, "The Doctrine of the TRINITY stated, in a circular Letter from the Baptist Ministers and Messengers assembled at Olney, Bucks, May 28, 29, 1776, to the several churches they represent, or have received letters from, meeting at Nottingham, Sheephead, Leicester, &c." To which are added, by way of postscript, A few remarks on a late publication, intituled, "HORÆ SOLITARIÆ; or, Essays upon some remarkable Names and Titles of JESUS CHRIST." Also some short observations on a treatise upon the *Divinity* of our LORD JESUS CHRIST; written by JAMES ABADIE; and now re-published by the Rev. Mr. ABRAHAM BOOTH.

6. VICARIOUS SACRIFICE; or the *Reality* and *Importance* of Atonement for Sin by the *Death* of CHRIST, asserted and defended, against the objections

objections of Dr. PRIESTLY, in his Appeal, Familiar Illustration, &c. with an appendix.

DIPPING NOT BAPTIZING; or, the Author's Opinion of the Subject, Mode, and Importance of Water-Baptism, according to the Scriptures: Wherein Dr. GILL's *Arguments* for the Mode of *Immersion*, and Mr. BOOTH's for the Importance of it, as contained in his APOLOGY for the BAPTISTS are principally considered; with a few Remarks on some other Baptist WRITERS, namely, Mr. MARTIN, Mr. JENKINS, and Mr. McLEAN, who, in several of their late publications, seem to be strenuous advocates both for the *Mode* and *Importance* of it.

objections of Dr. Priestley, in his Appeal,
Pamphlet Illustration, &c. with an appendix.

Dipping not Baptizing; on the Author's
Opinion of the Subject, Mode, and Importance;
or Water-Baptism, according to the Scriptures;
Wherein Dr. Gual's argument for the Mode of
Baptizing, and Mr. Bostwick's for the Importance
of it, as contained in his Answer for the Baptists
are principally considered; with a few
Remarks on some other Baptist Writers,
namely, Mr. Gual, Mr. Bostwick, and Mr.
M. L. G. who in several of their publications
have been in the habit of attacking both for
the Mode and Importance of Baptizing.

